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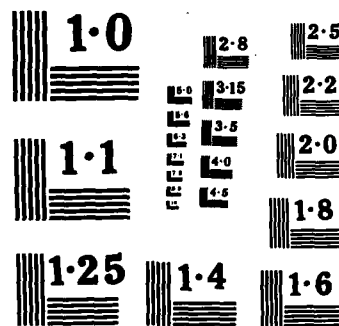
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## STUDENT REPORT

CHINA'S MILITARY PROFESSIONALISM

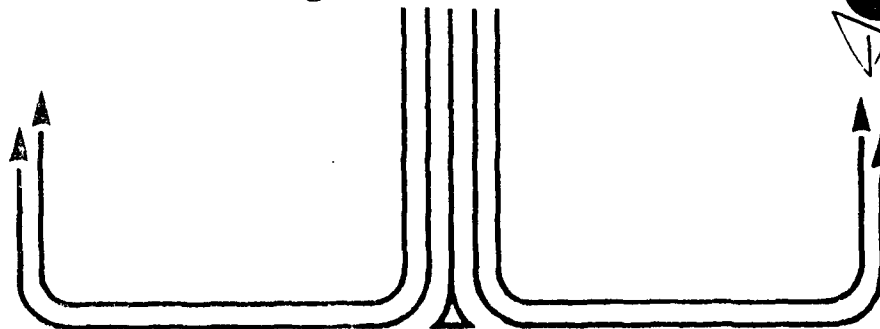
Major John M. Grissett

85-0980

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**REPORT NUMBER** 85-0980

**TITLE** CHINA'S MILITARY PROFESSIONALISM

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Submitted to the faculty in partial fulfillment of  
requirements for graduation.

**AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE**  
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## PREFACE

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In 1949 the forces of Mao Tse-tung were successful in overthrowing Chiang Kai-shek. As the People's Republic of China emerged, the armed forces of China, known as the People's Liberation Army (PLA), underwent tremendous change in modernizations and professionalization.

This paper reviews and analyzes the professionalism of the PLA from 1949-1984. Over the years, as the modernization of the PLA's military equipment occurred, the issue of professionalism and professional military education became a source of conflict within the Chinese leadership. Thus this paper reviews the development of the Chinese armed forces with a focus on the emergence of professionalism and concludes with an estimate of current trends for the PLA in the 1990's.

In preparing this paper, I wish to gratefully express my appreciation to Paul H. B. Godwin, Professor at the Air University Center for Aerospace Doctrine, Research and Education, Alabama, for his advice and guidance in helping me to organize this paper. His expertise and patience were invaluable in assisting me to complete this project.



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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The author, Major John M. Grissett, was commissioned into the United States Army in 1971 with a BS degree in engineering from the United States Military Academy. He has served in assignments with the infantry in Germany, training units at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and in research and development at the United States Army Infantry Board at Fort Benning, Georgia.

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He graduated from various United States Army schools including Airborne, Ranger, Infantry Officer Basic and Advanced courses, and Command and General Staff College. In addition, he has completed the Program Management Course at the Defense Systems Management College, Fort Belvoir, Virginia and spent a year in the Training with Industry Program at Litton Data Systems, Los Angeles, California.



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**REPORT NUMBER** 85-0980

**AUTHOR(S)** MAJOR JOHN M. GRISSETT

**TITLE** CHINA'S MILITARY PROFESSIONALISM

I. Problem: The People's Republic of China (PRC) is modernizing its military force. What progress has been made in the professionalization of China's ground force since 1949 and what is an estimate of the program if continued into the 1990's?

II. Objectives: The objectives are: 1) To define military professionalism; 2) Review and analyze changes in military professionalism in China's ground forces since 1949; 3) Review and analyze China's professional military education programs for the ground forces since 1949; 4) Examine

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internal and external factors affecting military professionalism in China's ground forces since 1949; and 5) Determine probable changes in military professionalism of China's ground forces through the 1990's.

III. Discussion of Analysis: Since 1949, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has improved the professionalism of its military force. With Soviet military and technical assistance through 1959, the PRC began to modernize its armed forces, but military professionalism was overshadowed by the influence of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Although the Soviet withdrawal from China in 1960 resulted in a temporary setback, the CCP strengthened its hold over the PLA through new regulations, but the PLA continued to emphasize professional development. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1966 was chaotic and eventually placed the PLA in a dominating position in the PRC. After the Chinese Defense Minister, Lin Biao, vanished in 1971, Mao Tse-tung increased the civilian control over the PLA.

The PRC fully realizes the need to modernize to assume an influential role in the international environment.

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Although it does not perceive the threat of a direct confrontation with the Soviets or Americans in the near future, the PRC wants to professionalize the PLA. The PLA has greatly improved its training, especially in combined arms operations, and continues to improve its military equipment.

The present PRC leadership has listed the "four modernizations" of agriculture, industry, science and technology, and defense as its primary domestic goals. Defense is listed as the fourth area of concern because of the significant problems existing in the other three areas. The PRC will continue to modernize the PLA but not at the expense of these other areas. Through emphasis on training to improve combat effectiveness and support for establishing a professional officer corps, the PLA will continue to progress as an armed force without substantial increases in defense spending. This trend will continue into the 1990's. Although improvements will be made slowly, modernization of the PLA will eventually place the PRC in the superpower category.

IV. Findings: The PRC has greatly modernized the PLA since 1949 and will continue this momentum. The leadership

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of the PRC supports a professional armed force; however, the military is subordinate to the Chinese Communist Party. The PRC has learned much from its past and realizes that a modern, professional military force is necessary to increase its influence and security in the international environment.

V. Conclusions: The PLA has emphasized professionalism since 1949 and will continue to professionalize its armed forces into the 1990's. Although the PRC lists defense as fourth in priority for development, it recognizes the need to continue the modernization of the PLA through a long-range program.

VI. Recommendations: The United States should continue to maintain good relations with the PRC. In addition, the U.S. should continue to assist the PRC economically and technologically where feasible. The development of the PLA could be in the best interests of the U.S. As the PRC becomes stronger, the influence of the Soviets in the region may diminish and friendly relations between the U.S. and the PRC will influence the balance of power in the Asia-Pacific region.

## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

The People's Republic of China (PRC) has undergone tremendous changes since its formation in 1949, and central among these is the transformation of the semi-guerrilla armies that defeated Chiang Kai-shek's forces into a combined armed force of 4.2 million known collectively as the People's Liberation Army (PLA). (23:52) The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) realized that after the PRC was established, it must be concerned not only with geographical borders of China but also with an international role congruent with its power, security objectives, and the constraints imposed by other nations. Mao Tse-tung became the principal architect of the Chinese security strategy. (18:2) Consistent with the PRC objective to become a leader in the modern world, the PLA modernized its forces from 1949 through 1984 and developed its military professionalism. This paper deals with the progress made by the PLA in developing a professional military force and presents an estimate of its continued success if continued into the 1990's.

In dealing with the term "professional," many ideas or descriptions may result. For this reason, a military "professional" is defined as a person within a military

Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR), not the least of which was Soviet insistence on dual control over PRC nuclear weapons built with Soviet help, but the PRC refused. (15:11) There were also issues related to Soviet foreign and defense policy. In 1957, the Soviets launched an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and orbiting satellites. The PRC felt that these events, together with the mild recession in the United States, shifted the balance of power to the communist bloc. The Soviets did not intend to use these weapons as a show of power but as weapon achievement to reach détente with the United States. This angered Mao and he saw this as an opportunity to assist the further decline of the West. This disagreement was a prime factor in the growing Sino-Soviet conflict. (16:93) The Soviets did not agree with the GLE movement because the communes established by the PRC were in contrast to their own collective farms, controlled by elected peasant members rather than state officials from a remote location. (5:401) In 1960, the USSR ended its last Soviet loans, and in 1962, the USSR terminated their assistance for PRC nuclear weapons program. (7:13) The Soviets had previously intervened over the reorganization and development of the Great Leap Forward. (16:11) Mao wanted to reduce the dependence on the USSR by 1960 virtually all the Soviet technicians were expelled from the PRC. (7:50)

He reorganized the high command of the PLA by subordinating the General Staff to the Minister of National Defense and appointed two career political commissars: Lo Jui-ch'ing, as Chief of the PLA General Staff and Ch'iu Hui-tso, as Chief of Staff Rear Services Department. In addition, Lin wanted to reconstruct the party organization in the PLA, establish stricter political education, and achieve closer contact with the masses. He advocated the superiority of men over material and reinstated Su Yu, fired in 1958 for advocating the priority of PLA modernization, as Vice Minister of Defense. (14:55,56) As Lin was reorganizing the PLA, the widening in the ideology gap between the PRC and the Soviets had grown too large to repair.

Although the Soviets had provided the PRC with technical and military assistance since 1949, the leadership of both nations had never developed a close relationship. After Stalin's death in March 1953, there was a massive technology transfer from the Soviets to the PRC. The Soviets agreed to provide production facilities and military technology, to include conventional and nuclear weapons development programs. (11:2) The Soviet efforts enabled the PRC to assemble their first Yak-18 primary trainers in Shenyang in 1954 and produce their first jet fighters (MIG-17) in 1956. (14:48) But, by 1958, there were serious differences between the PRC and the Soviets.

A number of issues began to divide the PRC and the



and subordinates, and soldiers and civilians. Its goal was to strengthen political control by the CCP. (16:133) This political movement was part of Mao's Great Leap Forward (GLF).

The political commissars saw the GLF as the opportunity to regain power lost during previous modernization moves by the PLA. At the Lushan Plenum Conference, held August 1959, P'eng Te-huai, whose grip on the PLA had been reduced, was removed as Defense Minister. The political leadership opposed him because of his opposition to economic policies, his disruptions to the GLF movement and mass militia, and his identification with the Soviets. (14:53) Furthermore, officers were criticized for maintaining the importance of their profession at the expense of the "mass line." The message was that the PLA was a reflection of the Chinese society with all officers and members of the society being political equals. (16:78,79) In September, Lin Piao became the new Minister of Defense, and the PLA was in disarray.

Lin Piao knew the PLA needed to be reorganized. He began to revitalize the political control over the PLA by strengthening the party presence. (14:133) He abolished the mass militia and ordered the military districts to rebuild a round, effective militia, using the men within the PLA as the core. The PLA was deprived of resources diverted to the militia and regional forces. Lin acted to restore discipline, unity, and morale within the PLA.

Officers opposed the party committee structure and political commissars because they impeded the performance of their professional duties and were considered incompetent to handle military matters. This dilemma was further compounded because officers felt that they did not have the authority commensurate with their responsibility. Each knew they must get along, but modernization had placed strain on their relationships. (16:58,61,67) By 1957, there was growing dissension within the political leadership of the PRC over the professionalization of the PLA.

Mao Tse-tung opposed Soviet influence on the PLA and wanted to increase his own political power. Although he had allowed greater criticisms during 1957, he realized that this presented a threat to his own power. (2:30) During May-June 1958, a campaign began in the PLA to emphasize the teachings of Mao. (16:123) The PLA was sent to organize new communes and was used in economic development projects, particularly public works. Tens of millions of peasants were brought into the militia with thousands of demobilized PLA cadre assigned to organize them. (2:13) In September, a movement was launched, through a General Political Department directive, which sent officers down to companies to serve as common soldiers, hsia-lien teng-ping. This program required officers to spend one month per year serving as privates. It was aimed at improving leadership and the relationships between officers and enlisted men, superiors

research. (14:52) The Soviets supplied the PRC with the technical equipment and material necessary for the research and development of nuclear energy. Although in 1950, the Soviets assisted the PRC in establishing its first atomic research facility, the Institute of Atomic Energy of the Chinese Academy of Science in Peking, primary assistance did not begin until 1955 when its assistance contributed to building a chemical separation plant in Sinkiang. (28:30) Their efforts substantially helped the PRC develop a nuclear capability. (11:9) Mao enjoyed the nuclear protection provided by the Soviets while the PRC was developing its own deterrence. While the PRC was developing this capability, disagreements developed between the PLA and the CCP on how this power should be used. The professionally-oriented PLA stressed the need for a first strike capability, advocated rapidly equipping the armed forces, and opposed defense budget cuts. The leaders in the CCP believed that the PRC could survive a nuclear attack and could win against an adversary through a protracted war. They opposed diverting resources from economic development for military purposes. (16:92) This conflict highlighted the growing disagreement between the military and the political establishments.

The CCP had control over the PLA through a hierarchy of committees, political officers, political departments, and party membership. This hierarchy parallels the military chain of command from the highest to the lowest levels.

grade rank, captain (CPT), while technical school graduates were commissioned as first lieutenants (1LT). Persons with good records could be given the rank of captain. The emphasis on professional competence was shown through advancement: two years from 2LT to 1LT; two years from 1LT to CPT; three years from CPT to Major; three years from lieutenant colonel to colonel (COL); and four years from COL to Senior COL. Persons who excelled could be promoted early, while those who were not qualified could be extended six months to two years. (16:34,35) With this growth of professionalism in the PLA, serious problems developed between the officers and their subordinates in the mid 1950's.

Some officers had come from affluent backgrounds and demonstrated contempt for the recruits that were peasants. The introduction of conscription and frequent rotation of enlisted men precluded the formation of long, close ties. Some of the measures adopted toward professionalization made some officers more status conscious and distant from their men. (16:73) There were numerous reports of officers, as well as their families, abusing soldiers. (14:52) P'eng Te-huai was aware of the problems and later took measures to rectify them; however, there were growing differences on the nuclear strategy position of the PRC.

Although Mao Tse-tung opposed some Soviet influence, he sought and obtained their support in 1955 for nuclear

were to be based on their political quality and professional abilities. Entry into the officer corps became limited, and the authority to appoint, remove, or promote officers was centralized in the military chain of command and the standing committee of the National People's Congress. Although specialization was encouraged in the lower ranks, there were no distinctions among the highest level leaders of the PLA because their political, military, and technical responsibilities were closely interwoven. (14:50) No single event contributed more to the growth of professionalism than the adoption of this document. It altered the informal "democratic" nature of the Chinese Communist officer corps and laid the groundwork for the development of a status-conscious, routinized, and formalized officer corps. (16:30,34)

This formalized officer corps began to classify officers into categories based upon their fields of specialization, i.e., commanding officers, political officers, and specialties such as technical, quartermaster, medical, veterinary, administrative and judge advocate. The regulations established the regular channels for an officer to enter the PLA. During peacetime, officers were to be drawn from military academies, advanced military technical schools and institutes, and noncommissioned officers who passed selective examinations at the military academies or special training courses. The conditions for commission further reflected professionalism, with the graduates of military academies being given company

transfer of nuclear technology from the Soviets. His ideas clashed with Chou En-lai and Liu Shao-chi, who stressed economic development, even at the expense of reductions in the military budget. (14:121,254) P'eng felt that the PLA needed to be restructured to become an effective, professional military force. He restructured the large division structure used in Korea (17,000 men) to a "triangular division" concept (12,900 men). (14:48)

As the PLA continued to become more modern and improve its professionalism, Chinese editorials summarized the progress. The New China News Agency reported significant progress within the PLA. It stated that the PLA has improved its equipment and built modern artillery, armored, air defense, and engineer forces. The PLA had also unified its command, organization and training system, and strengthened its discipline. An editorial in the Jen-min jih-pao (People's Daily, July 1954) reported that the central task of the PLA during this modernization was to train its officers. (16:4,5) As the PLA developed, the corporateness of its members became more apparent.

In February 1955, a major document was published entitled, "Regulation on the Service of Officers." This document was designed to further develop the PLA into a modern, regular army. Groups and subgroups evolved using Soviet-style ranks and insignia. The officer corps became divided into functionally specific groups. Officer selection and promotion

era; 2) a professional officer corps should be established; and 3) measures must be undertaken to accomplish both tasks.

(16:2,3,7) Although modernization of the PLA continued through 1953, an attempt was made by PLA commissars to reverse the decline in political work and expand their prestige. (14:48)

By 1954 these political leaders, seeking to reverse the decline in political work, published a document entitled, "Draft Regulations on Political Work," but their efforts to stop the professionalism movement were unsuccessful. With Stalin's death in 1953, Sino-Soviet relations improved and further facilitated the move toward modernization of the PLA. The previous volunteer tradition was abandoned in September 1954 when conscription began. Regularization, modernization, and strict discipline became the order of the day, and the PLA officer corps was oriented toward the Soviet model. Peng Te-huai became the first Minister of Defense in September 1954, with Yeh Chien-ying as his deputy. Peng cut the militia strength 10-30% and organized the army reserve divisions to replace these cuts. His deputy and Liu Po-cheng, Chief of Staff of the PLA, resisted these cuts since conscription had resulted in major reductions in the size of the PLA. (14:49) Liu sought rapid changes within the PLA. He supported an expansion in weapons production, an increase in research and development and defense expenditures, large-scale purchases in conventional weapons, and the

of lives. (14:47) The Korean War was to have great significance for leaders of the PLA.

The PLA leadership had learned the importance of logistics and firepower. The war became the catalyst to modernize the PLA. After the war, the United States sent a carrier force down the Chinese coast. Its mission was to conduct aerial missions over coastal provinces to test the Chinese defenses and photograph military installations. After this incident, many PRC leaders became convinced that the modernization of the PLA should receive a top priority.

(14:48) The leaders of the PRC clearly recognized the necessity of developing a close relationship with the Soviets to obtain vital technology and military equipment. (11:1)

The leadership of the PRC emphasized the need to transform a purely land-force army to a modern, technical army.

In 1952 Hsiao Hua, Deputy Director General of the General Political Department of the People's Revolutionary Military Council, summarized the direction that the PLA needed to follow to become modern. He advocated the mastery of military science, skillful use of modern weapons and equipment, and strict adherence to military discipline. In addition, he underscored the importance of training in how to coordinate the actions of different branches within the PLA and the necessity to train a professional officer corps. From available documents the leaders of the PRC recognized the following: 1) the PLA should be prepared for a modern



(14:47) In addition to the command problems, there were serious problems in the level of available weapons and equipment.

The PLA entered the war with the same weapons and equipment used during the civil war. The initial intent was to resupply the PLA with captured enemy supplies and equipment, as it had in previous military operations; however, severe logistical problems developed and this failed. (14:46,47) In the fall of 1950, after the defeat of the Korean People's Army, the Soviets began to provide a large-scale defense transfer to the PRC. Providing military assistance gave them the opportunity to avoid direct intervention into Korea and risk a direct confrontation with the United States while at the same time supporting two Communist allies.

(11:3) The Soviets could use the Chinese PLA to further their own objectives. But even with Soviet military assistance, there were serious flaws in the PLA's strategy and tactics.

When P'eng Te-huai took command of the PLA in the spring of 1951, he realized that the tactics which had been used in the civil war were not appropriate against a well-armed enemy. He needed additional logistical support and knew that the PLA needed to standardize its ordnance. By late 1951 the PLA was gradually reequipped with Soviet weapons. But lacking material superiority, the PLA used "human sea" attacks against the enemy, sacrificing thousands

from getting into conflicts of less than vital interests; 2) avoid international isolation or outright confrontation with the superpowers; and 3) develop a less threatening and more helpful relationship with the superpowers, but never with the flexibility to change. Since the United States denied the legitimacy of the PRC, China felt it was vulnerable to American power. There was no reasonable alternative but to seek help from another superpower - the Soviet Union. Since both shared a common border and similar ideologies, the PRC believed the gains (security and economic needs) outweighed the risks involved. (18:3,4) Soviet military assistance began in February 1950 with the Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance. Early assistance was limited, and the leadership began to demobilize the PLA but halted the program with the PRC's entry into the Korean War.

The Korean War impacted on the PLA. There were serious problems between the field commanders and the commissars under the "dual command" system where both were equal. During the first nine months of the conflict, the political system of the PLA was affected by the erosion of commissar credibility. Commanders felt that the commissars were not useful and became dissatisfied with their presence. Due to the dual structure requiring joint decision-making, there were strong disagreements between the two groups.

## Chapter Two

1949 - 1959

In 1949 the Chinese Communists began to convert a large semi-guerrilla force into a modern army. They soon realized that the army needed a large number of skilled officers to accomplish such a complex task. They discovered that the Red Army commanders were not adequately prepared and a professional officer corps was needed. (16:IX) In October 1949, Hsu Hsiang-ch'ien became the first Chief of Staff of the PLA, with Nieh Jung-chen as his deputy. Nieh had received his training in Europe as an engineer and became a key architect for the modern PLA. The Military Advisory Council (MAC), which was at the top of the military structure, was dominated by Yeh Chien-ying, Chu Teh and P'eng Te-huai. The PLA and MAC were run by professionally and technically oriented officers. (14:46) Even Mao Tse-tung delivered a speech in 1949 to Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference stressing the need to modernize the armed forces. (16:2) Recognizing the need to modernize, Mao wanted to avoid international conflict. He offered three maxims for Chinese security: 1) identify the principal political and military threats to the PRC and prevent China

vocation who exhibits the characteristics of expertise, responsibility and corporateness. (13:8) Within his profession, he demonstrates the expertise through acquiring special knowledge and skills, responsibility by representing the security of the state and implementing state policy, and corporateness by living and working apart from society. A major facet of the military professional is his nationalistic orientation. (13:4,5) He supports the government and is prepared to forfeit his life in the defense of national interests. The birth of military professionalism coincided with the establishment of the PRC but its development was severely strained during the formative years of the new state.

## Chapter Three

1960 - 1965

The Soviet withdrawal hit the PRC hard. Although the PRC tried to recover, by mid 1961, there were serious military budget reductions. While the withdrawal was occurring, Lin Piao slacked off the hsia lien policy. He still required officers in the PLA to go to company level, but they were used as observers and instructors, not as privates. Since 1960, there had been no serious outward signs of tension between the CCP and the PLA. Lin had the trust of the professional officers and the party leadership. In 1961, the political control of the PLA was strengthened with the document entitled, "Regulations Governing the PLA Management and Educational Work at the Company Level." This document dealt primarily with leadership within the PLA and emphasized the political equality of the officers in leadership positions with soldiers. A further attempt to strengthen political control at company level came with the publishing of "Four Sets of Regulations on the Political Work in Company Level Units of the PLA," in 1961. These regulations were designed to rid the PLA of the Soviet influence which conflicted with Chinese policies. (16:140,141,145) In October 1961, the General Political Department (GPD) of the PLA issued,

"Selections of Mao Tse-tung's Works," for the PLA to study to further politicize the PLA. Although the PLA issued new training manuals and placed a greater emphasis on technical skills, the CCP took steps to maintain its political hold on the PLA. (14:56)

The PLA continued to develop as a professional organization; however, the CCP wanted to insure its control over the organization was secure. In 1963 the CCP Central Committee published, "Political Work Regulations for the Chinese People's Liberation Army." These regulations codified Lin Piao's policies and dealt with the doctrine, organization, political work, and the leadership methods of the PLA. They formalized policy and emphasized Mao's hold on the Chinese society. They also advocated additional military training and maintained that the decisive factor for victory, over an adversary, was men rather than things. By late 1963, there were essentially two leadership factions within the Chinese Communist Party: the first headed by Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-p'ing, who operated through the civilian CCP, and the second headed by Mao Tse-tung and Lin Piao, who operated through a military party system consisting of the General Political Department (GPD) of the PLA and unit party branches. The popularity and organizational strength of the PLA increased, and Mao became satisfied that the PLA could be used as a model for the rest of China. (14:56,57) As the CCP attempted to maintain its control

over the PLA, a conflict developed within the PLA over how to respond to the expanding war in Vietnam.

In 1964, Lo Jui-ch'ing, Chief of the PLA General Staff, tried to convince the Military Affairs Commission (MAC) and a sick Lin Piao, to give him control of the PLA. He advocated closer ties with the Soviets and felt that the PRC would inevitably become involved in Vietnam. Lo therefore sought a rapprochement with the USSR that would place China once again under the Soviet nuclear umbrella. (14:60,61) Even as this conflict over security policy developed, China sought to improve its technical modernization.

The nuclear weapons development program accelerated, and the technical modernization of the PLA continued without Soviet assistance. In 1964, the PRC exploded its first nuclear device, joining the ranks of the nuclear weapon community. In January 1965, Lin Piao was confirmed as the Minister of National Defense and First Vice-Premier by the National People's Congress in June 1965. In an effort to further rid the PLA of Soviet influence, military ranks, titles, and insignias were abolished. All soldiers were required to wear the Chung Shan suit and cap to prevent any distinction in uniforms. (14:60) As a result of his conflict with Lin Piao, Lo was stripped of power in November 1965 and the groundwork was laid for Mao's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR).

## Chapter Four

1966 - 1977

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution became a "witch hunt" which sought to promote the ideology of submission. (4:180,182) By the end of 1966, many top military commanders and staffs had been dismissed from the PLA in a move by Mao to dominate the armed forces. The Cultural Revolution Group (CRG) established by Liu Chih-chien with Ho Lung, Liao Han-sheng and Su Chien-hua was dissolved in January 1967. A new CRG was formed directly under the Military Affairs Commission, controlled by Lin Piao, and the chaos created by the GPCR was to directly affect the PLA. (14:93)

The officer corps of the PLA in August 1967 was faced with the domestic crises of the GPCR. There was growing political factionalism, economic stagnation, and discrediting of civilian political institutions. Although there were radical attempts to undermine the authority of the PLA, the PLA did not stage a coup. Mao used the PLA to dominate the PRC from 1965-1969. By September 1967, the PLA was the only authoritative political institution remaining in the PRC. In March 1968, Yang Ch'eng-wu was replaced as acting Chief of Staff of the PLA, even though he had



had an inconspicuous role and only obeyed orders. By the summer of 1968, civil order was being restored to the PRC but the civil strife had strained the PLA and had caused hundreds of thousands of civilian casualties. Nonetheless, the PLA and Lin Piao increased their political power, and when fighting broke out on the Soviet border in 1969, the PLA was in a dominating position. (14:89,91,100,104)

Mao became alarmed at the aggressiveness of the Soviets. He issued orders for the Chinese to begin digging tunnels for protection and advocated storing grain. (6:19) But he was also concerned about the growing power of the PLA. By 1969, the PLA commanders of military districts and military regions had replaced much of the provincial party bureaucracy. Mao was alarmed by the militarization of the CCP and wanted a return to civilian control. Although Lin Piao had been designated as the successor and deputy to Mao, Mao began to organize against him with the support of Chou En-lai and moderates. (14:109) By 1970, the open struggle between Lin and Mao became apparent. The opposition focused on Lin's attempt to centralize his own power in Peking. (1:25) Lin openly criticized those persons who had drafted a projected state constitution, for which Chou En-lai was the architect. He opposed the constitution because it deleted the position of Chairman of the PRC. After Lin's denunciation of the document, Mao organized efforts to depose him. In 1971, Lin vanished. The Chinese government reports that while

he was attempting to flee an aborted coup, led by the high command of the PLA, he was killed in a plane crash in Mongolia. (14:108,109,110) With Lin gone, Mao could curtail the power of the PLA and begin to expand civilian control.

The PLA began to place greater emphasis on national unity, discipline, and obedience to the CCP. The army disengaged from the civil sector and a moderate political trend began. (14:111,115) Although the military budget was cut substantially (25 percent) in 1972, the professionalization of the PLA continued, and the PRC wanted to expand its role in the modern world. (11:55)

The PRC knew that it had to improve its relationships with other nations if it wanted to increase its international influence. Policies followed by the PRC since the mid 1960's led to a form of self-imposed isolation (in 1960 its only ally was Albania), but this situation changed dramatically in 1971. In that year, the PRC became a permanent member of the United Nations with a seat on the Security Council. With this event, the world recognized the sovereignty of the PRC and afforded it world recognition. That year also marked the PRC's first contact with the United States government when Henry Kissinger made his secret visit to China. But the major event occurred in 1972, when the President of the United States, Richard M. Nixon, visited the PRC and signed the Shanghai Communique. This document officially recognized the PRC as the legitimate government

of China and signalled the acceptance of the PRC as a great world power. (6:9) As the PRC was increasing its influence in the world area, the PLA was preparing to take its place in a modern society.

The authority of the CCP over the PLA had survived the test of time. Attempts to radicalize the PLA officer corps were met with obedience and passive resistance. Although the PLA demonstrated the short-term guise of "political-ization," it pursued a long-range trend toward professionalism. Many old warriors, i.e., Yeh Chien-ying, Nieh Jung-chen and Su Yu, never relinquished their goal of a professional PLA. They sought to dampen the extremism of modernization and encourage constructive participation. Some military officers advocated a "one man command" system to reduce the political involvement of the PLA with the CCP. The PLA began to give greater credit to commanders and units for accomplishments by citing them in reports by name. (14:115,122,123) The PRC recognized the need to develop its national defense but not at the expense of its economic development.

In 1975, military procurement increased, i.e., strategic missile systems and their associated space and communication programs. Teng Hsiao-ping became the Chief of Staff of the PLA, and the Military Affairs Commission made the decision to consolidate the PLA, intensify military training and preparation for war, and improve weapons and equipment.

(11:56,58) Chou En-lai stated in 1975, at the fourth National People's Congress that the national economy needed to be developed in two stages: 1) an independent industrial and economic system before 1980 and 2) a comprehensive modernization of agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology before the year 2000. (7:87) His words showed the PRC commitment to modernize the defense establishment. Prior to 1976, the PRC advocated two major doctrinal concepts: 1) a "people's war" with the emphasis on maintaining and defending the homeland and an insistence on strong political, military, and ideological preparation and 2) "wars of national liberation" which were aimed at gaining and maintaining political power over a target country. (25:1-7,1-10) Two factors remained unchanged: 1) dominance of men over machines and 2) politics. (12:124) Because Mao was growing physically weaker, speculation arose as to who would be his successor.

In January 1976, Chou En-lai died and Mao Tse-tung died in September. Teng had lost favor with the CCP and was removed from office. His military modernization efforts were criticized because he emphasized the importance of machines over manpower. Following Mao's death the "Gang of Four" (Wang Hung-wen, Chen Ch'un-Chiao, Yao Wen-juan and Chiang Ch'ing, Mao's wife) tried to seize power. Moderate members of the Politburo formed an alliance with the PLA leadership to rid themselves of this radical element.

In October 1976, the "Gang of Four" was arrested and imprisoned. (11:57) The senior leadership of the PLA never supported the radical group. This prevented a major conflict between the PLA leadership and the CCP. Hua Kuo-feng became the new premier of the PRC and a debate began over the modernization of the PLA.

In the wake of Mao's death and the ouster of the radical leadership, China urgently needed technical assistance for economic development. Two decades of internal conflict found the PRC lagging behind in economic development and military power. (18:11) In 1977, the modernization of the PLA continued with the development of new weapons systems, and its leaders continued their emphasis on professionalism. The groundwork and preparation was now available for the current (1978-1984) professionalization trends.

## Chapter Five

### CURRENT (1978 - 1984) PLA PROFESSIONALIZATION

During 1978, the PLA began its current phase toward professionalism. There were two major national conferences: the first on PLA political work and the second on militia work. These conferences underscored the continuation of the PLA within the political system, the dual-command (commisat) system, and the militia. The Minister of Defense, Yeh Chieh-ying, wanted to strengthen the PLA political work and publicly stated that politics and expertise were of equal importance. (14:124) Hua presented a speech to the 11th National People's Congress which outlined the Chinese commitment to the modernization of agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology. (28:26) Regulations were published to improve the performance and professionalization of the PLA. The first, entitled "Regulations on the Services of Officers of the Chinese People's Liberation Army," wanted to tie promotions to individual performance, thus emphasizing the aspects of personal knowledge, experience, and responsibility associated with professionalism. The second document, entitled "Political Work Regulations," reinforced the CCP absolute leadership over the PLA and emphasized the need to educate the PLA ideologically. (14:228,232)

As the 1970's came to an end, the leadership in the PRC understood the necessity to improve the PLA in education, training and weapons.

In 1978, the Liberation Army Daily explained two components of the military modernization effort: 1) procurement of sophisticated nuclear and conventional weapons and 2) training personnel to use them, including tactics and technology. The PLA recognized the linkage between technology and the development of compatible strategy and tactics. Its leaders knew that to implement strategy, they needed increased levels of trained, competent maintenance personnel. (11:69) The PLA revived the military courts and increased emphasis on discipline. The PRC leadership sought to sustain its modern military forces by providing the necessary professional military education (PME) and training. (14:232) During this period, the PRC made dramatic improvements in its relations with the United States. The Chinese leader, Teng Hsiao-ping, wanted better ties with the West. He sought assistance to improve China's move toward modernization. He knew that the economic needs of the PRC were great so he desired to reduce any confrontation with the Soviets so that defense needs would be less imperative. (18:12,13) As China improved its international relations, the PLA continued toward professionalism. In 1979, the evidence showed that officers were encouraged to be actively involved in the military profession and become well-informed about

issues and technical matters bearing on national security. Senior PLA officers contended that the military officers should be aggressive, creative, flexible, and well-read in the technical, professional, and political fields. The units in the PLA sought to improve performance and acquire technical knowledge. (17:92,97,93) Since 1979, the PLA stressed the need to retrain the current officer corps and improve the quality of incoming officers. (8:21) As the PRC prepared for the 1980's, the PLA also went through severe changes in its leadership.

As the PRC moved into the 1980's three issues dominated Chinese security planning: 1) Sino-Soviet political and military rivalry; 2) the relationship between the international environment and efforts to progress in agriculture, industry, military, and scientific power; and 3) the creation of a modernized force posture, defense doctrine, and institutional structure. (20:5,7,12) During early 1980, the PRC developed high expectations in further dealings with the United States. Visits between the U.S. Secretary of Defense and the PRC Minister of Defense encouraged the Chinese to anticipate the possible transfer of technology to China; however, these transfers were blocked and impeded due to the United States support for Taiwan. (18:14,16) Because of the increasing contact with the outside world, the political leverage exercised by the PLA leadership was reduced. The Minister of National Defense, Hu Hsiang-chien, stated that the



modernization of the PLA could not be separated from the modernization of agriculture, industry, science and technology. (20:8) The PLA's incursion into Vietnam in 1979 showed the deficiencies in equipment and training in combined arms operations and the need for increased emphasis on a professional army. (9:24) Hsu advocated support for modern weapons and operational methods to substantially improve the PLA. But in March 1981, a significant event occurred in the leadership of the PLA. Vice Premier Keng Piao was appointed Hsu's successor as Minister of Defense. This further reduced the political power of the military since Keng's career had never been principally military. (20:9) The PRC also had significant economic problems which prevented rapid PLA modernization.

The severe budget restraints of 1980 reduced the probability that there would be a major injection of new weaponry into the PLA, thereby reinforcing a decision made in late 1978. Emphasis was to be placed on training and professional military education. In November 1980, an all-army conference was held on how to improve training in the PLA. After reviewing the results of training in the PLA for the previous year, the conference concluded that further training should concentrate on improving the capabilities of the officer corps. (10:8) The PRC was aware of the need to modernize weapons and equipment of the PLA, but recognized, because of its economic situation, it would be difficult to supply

or equipment from foreign sources. Weapon and equipment modernization would occur only slowly, and wherever possible, would be undertaken by the Chinese themselves.

In 1987, the PLA's per capita gross national product was \$664 (constant dollars), (27:54) ranking it among the poorest third world nations. Thus development of the economy as a whole took precedence over development of the defense industries. (20:17) The PLA would emphasize training to prepare for future increments of modern weaponry. The Army Chief of Staff of the PLA advocated shifting the emphasis in training from infantry to tank warfare and spending more time on combined arms warfare and training of officers. (2:26) Although emphasis was given on revising the Chinese strategy of protracted war, the PLA realized, to confront a better equipped adversary, developing a strategy to block or disrupt a Soviet invasion as it crossed the border would be extremely difficult. The Chinese leadership lacked the mobility and lethality required to conduct offensive operations early in the war. In summary, the Chinese defense concept went into effect. In 1981, the most important changes in the PLA took place: 1) the main focus of attack shifted from enemy infantrymen to tanks; 2) combined arms training was replaced by combined arms training; 3) combined arms warfare was emphasized more than infantry warfare; and 4) it was recognized that a modern command and control system was needed. (11:53) As

## Chapter Eight

### CONCLUSION

The PLA has made tremendous progress from 1949-1984. It grew from a semi-guerrilla army to become one of the most armed forces (4.2 million men) in the world. To take its place in the modern world, the PRC realized the PLA's that the PLA must develop a professional officer class. In spite of severe set-backs in the 1960's and 1970's, the armed forces have progressed toward this goal. Based on its past developments and current programs, the trend toward professionalization of the PLA will continue through the 1990's. Since the PRC is attempting to solve its economic, industrial and technological problem, the trend toward the technological modernization of the armed forces will continue. The Chinese leadership do not perceive the need to radically develop the PLA, so the trend will continue as a long range program. Changes will be more incremental in nature. With the potential threat of future military confrontation with other modern armies such as the USSR and the US, the PLA will continue the trend toward professionalization. It fully recognizes that much can be learned from the US; however, only a modern, professional military

personnel system. The PLA has made substantial progress in 3, 5, 6 and 7. Only category 1 appears to have a low priority. (15:66,67) But as defense spending increases, the PLA weaponry will improve gradually. Regardless of the progress made to modernize the PLA, there has been continuity in Chinese discussions and debates during the past three decades related to acquisition and use of modern arms. Throughout this period, emphasis has focused on primarily five questions: 1) what to acquire - mix of military forces required to maintain security; 2) how much - size of this military force; 3) how quickly - degree of priority and speed of development; 4) by what means - external assistance versus indigenous development; and 5) for what purposes - political objectives served by acquiring and employing modern arms. (19:4,5)

The 1990's should provide an armed force in the PRC with weapons having improved range, accuracy, and speed. There will be a greater number of more accurate and survivable strategic weapons. The officer corps of the PLA will be more competent in the skills required to sustain, maintain, deploy, and employ its increasingly modernized force structure. Clearly, as the technological development improves, the PLA will continue to improve the combat skills of both the officer corps and its enlisted personnel. (10:24,25)

economic underdevelopment in the PRC, defense commitments will not be the major issue. The PRC, realizing that its money and resources may be spent better in areas other than defense, is emphasizing the professionalization of the PLA officer corps as a means to improve its defense posture without substantial investment in equipment.

Although the PRC uses nuclear weapons as a deterrent against the USSR, it also views its conventional forces as a major component of its deterrent strategy. Thus the conventional forces deploy increasing numbers of armored fighting vehicles (AFV), artillery, anti-tank guided missiles, combat aircraft, and the military equipment essential for modern warfare, which although dated, are nonetheless effective for offensive operations. A critical factor identified by the PLA to increase combat effectiveness is to improve the capabilities of the officer corps. The PRC realizes the necessity for a more proficient officer corps with proper training in planning, conducting, and supporting offensive operations on the modern battlefield. (8:1,14,23)

Colonel John D. Sloan listed seven major categories of Chinese military requirements: 1) improved weaponry; 2) improved training/unit readiness/education; 3) improved doctrine and tactics; 4) improved defense technology/production base; 5) improved logistical system; 6) improved mobilization/command and control; and 7) improved officer

without possessing the national capabilities or accomplishments that usually define the term. Its per capita gross national product in 1982 was \$604 (constant dollars), placing it among the world's less developed countries. Although the PRC has tested and deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) and fusion weapons, it still exerts influence well beyond its actual material and military strength. This influence evolves from the fact that the PRC shows little hesitancy to employ its armed forces when the risks of inaction exceeds the dangers of action. The May 1980 test of its ICBM gives the PRC the potential to reach targets in the United States. In October 1982, the successful test of its submarine launched ballistic missile (SLBM) will give it future military flexibility. (18:26,27) The PRC will continue to develop its military power and improve the professionalism of the PLA. It needs a professional army to compete realistically in a modern world. However, the present PLA does not contain the required technical skilled manpower to maintain and use technically advanced weapons systems and equipment, and the defense industries are not currently capable of producing high technology weapons and equipment in series production. (10:3) Since the PRC does not perceive the Soviets or Americans as a threat, (22:328) it can afford to approach the development of a professional PLA as a long-term investment in preparation for modern armaments in the future. With the present

War Under Modern Conditions," seeks to avoid the Maoist strategy of "luring the enemy deep." The rise of Teng has provided an atmosphere more conducive to political, economic, and institutional change than at any point in the past several decades. He represents leaders who are more pragmatic in their overall approach to politics and economics. They seem oriented to rid the PRC of past dogmatic practices and policies. (19:2) Teng further emphasizes the need for all officers to constantly improve their military and political qualities, as well as gain the knowledge and capacity for modern warfare.

Teng has also placed the modernization of national defense fourth in the four modernizations. It will be many years before the PLA can be classified as truly modern. Western analysts assess the PRC as lagging at least twenty years behind the Soviets in equipment, training and logistical support. (23:52,54) The PLA needs ground-to-air defense, communication equipment, modern armor and anti-tank weapons. In fact, their new tank now being produced is described as a good tank, but probably already outdated. Many of the old guard military leadership who advocated the theories of Mao are retiring, i.e., Marshal Yeh Chien-ying, 85, Chairman of the National People's Congress, titular head of the PRC and a leading opponent to the modernization of the PLA. (24:35,36)

The PRC enjoys the privileges accorded a world power

for nonmilitary purposes. Thus the stage has been set to further develop the PLA into the 1990's.

As the PRC continues to develop, it wants a place among the major economies of the world. To accomplish this, it seeks to replace its self-contained, self-reliant development by increasing its integration into the international economy. (5:135) The Chinese realize that increasing purchases of foreign equipment and technology place a burden on their balance of payments; therefore, they seek to expand exports and their line of credit with foreign sources. The PRC views the Soviet-American rivalry as a relic of history and wants to replace it with a less coercive international order. (18:1)

In rebuilding the armed forces to play its role in the future, Teng Hsiao-ping appears to be shaping and streamlining the PLA into a less politicized, more professional military force. The younger, better trained officers, are pushing out the old guard. A major effort has been underway to inject new ideas, devise more effective approaches to military thought and organization, and to recruit or advance new (younger) leaders into the decision-making process. Many of the key leaders are aged men who represent either resistance to change or an unwillingness to introduce substantial change. (19:3,6,7) Discipline is emphasized through the new forty-eight article disciplinary code established in 1984. The current defense doctrine entitled, "People's



## Chapter Seven

### PLA PROFESSIONALISM IN THE 1990's

Throughout the development of the PLA, professionalism evolved from a concept into reality. The professionally oriented officers developed views and values which often differed from the politically oriented party leaders. There developed a conflict between generations, differing in experiences, outlook, and responsibilities. The younger generation was more professionally oriented. The professional officers, during the course of PLA modernization, acquired the more specialized skills needed to manage and operate a fairly complex military establishment and were oriented toward their specialty. Although these officers were committed to the party leadership and ideology, they gave primary emphasis to the performance of their professional tasks. Not all officers within the PLA shared these ideas, all were members of the CCP, and all shared the belief that the CCP was supreme, and they only differed in orientation. The professionals within the PLA advocated the abolition or modification of some traditional concepts which impaired the efficiency and effectiveness of the PLA, i.e., excessive political controls in the army, and the use of the PLA

As the new emphasis on professionalism developed in the officer corps, the PLA also sought to strengthen its process through which it sought to select its officers. New officers were selected primarily from college graduates and approximately one hundred technical academies and schools that were specifically established to train the new generation of officers. These PLA operated schools recruited about ten thousand candidates per year from Chinese high school graduates and trained them to be "command cadres" and professional, technical personnel. These new officers selected from enlisted ranks attended "command schools" prior to commissioning and received college degrees upon graduation. (10:11)

As the PME programs developed the officer corps, the PLA prepared to further its professionalization efforts in the 1990's.

program attempted to provide officers greater technical and scientific knowledge. In 1981, Hsiao Ko identified the central task of the military academies as one of developing a new generation of middle-ranking and senior commanding personnel. (12:122,127) In 1981, reportedly one thousand commanders attended advanced courses at the PLA Military Academy. They studied modern military science, improving command skills, learning about modern warfare through the study of nuclear weapons, guided missiles, electronic warfare, and other aspects of the modern battlefield. When maneuvers were conducted in 1981 and 1982 to test these ideas, the scenario included tactical nuclear weapons. (10:9)

In January 1982, reports stated that special courses at the military academies had helped officers to learn military science, how to organize their troops and reform training, and strengthen their combat readiness. (12:134) Within the officer corps, professional and technical skills are expected to improve through the PME process prior to an officer being promoted. In the future, officers would not attend advanced schools or academies without completing their PME requirements at lower level schools. Reforms have placed a burden on the PME centers. In November 1983, Yang Shangkun of the CCP Military Commission complained the old ideas dominated the curricula of the PLA training programs and other senior defense officials agreed that reforms were needed. (10:11,13)

and professionalization of the PLA. These military academies became the main training ground for professional officers.

(16:4,21) The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution had destroyed many of the PME schools, and in 1980 Hsiao Ko, Vice Minister of Defense, reported that PLA PME was being rebuilt. (12:121) Hsiao was a major contributor to PME in the PLA. He referred to officer education and training as "capital construction" of the armed forces. (10:11)

The PLA expected the PME program to produce officers who were politically conscious, professionally competent, unyielding in work style, and physically strong. At the apex of the educational system were three military academies:

1) Military Academy for the General Staff Department to correspond with the PLA high command; 2) Political Academy for the General Political Department; and 3) Logistical Academy for the General Logistics Department. All were located in Peking. Each had service academies below them for the navy, air force, and specialized schools such as the PLA Advanced Infantry Academy. (12:121,122) As these institutions evolved, the emphasis on training subjects changed.

The training institutions of the PLA devoted more time to military subjects than to political subjects. They emphasized subjects dealing with strategy and tactics in the nuclear environment, the management of combined operations, and other aspects of modern warfare. The PME

training institutions, sixty-four were in logistics and military operations and eleven in the education of commissars. (14:49) The PLA clearly recognized the importance of logistics in military planning and operations. Officers needed the knowledge and expertise of how to use them effectively during combat operations. As training improved, the PLA saw the need for higher level schools and to improve the political training of its officers.

As the PLA continued to develop its military academies, four graduate schools were established: 1) General Staff and War College at Nanking; 2) General Military Academy at Harbin; 3) Military Research Institute at Peking; and 4) Academy of Military Sciences at Peking. (14:49) The PLA also established military and cultural schools to teach army officers the military and political thoughts of Mao Tse-tung. The importance of having a professional officers corps was recognized, and the schools wanted these officers to learn the art of conducting the coordinated actions of different branches within the PLA. (16:3) Officers needed to develop their expertise in dealing with all facets of combat. Without it, they would be ineffective in organizing and directing such a large combined arms force as the PLA. Soon the merits of the military academies were apparent.

The PLA built regular military, political, and cultural academies to train large numbers of officers. The graduates from these academies became the "backbone" in the modernization

## Chapter Six

### PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION (PME) IN THE PLA

Early emphasis was given to establishing professional military education schools and courses for the PLA. These institutions provided the basic skills needed for the professionalization of the officer corps. The PRC knew that its armed forces must advance professionally if it were to establish an important place in the modern world.

Training programs and officer schools were established to provide the necessary education. By August 1950, the first jet pilot training program began at Shenyang with Soviet instructors and aircraft. Senior officer schools were established in 1951 in Peking and Nanking, and an Air Force Academy was established in Sian. By the end of 1953, the PLA operated eight flight training schools. In 1958, an Advanced Military Institute was established in Nanking, and a senior war college was started in Peking called the PLA Military Academy. Both of these schools concentrated on the study of Soviet experience in armor, artillery, air-power and strategy. (14:46,49) In addition to emphasis on military training, a Military Science Academy was founded to direct progress in military research and development (11:10) By 1961, there were seventy-five

by operations designed to blunt an offensive early in a war. The emphasis shifted to combined arms operations. The entire planning concepts for military operations in the PLA had changed. These changes were paralleled by efforts to improve the technical proficiency of the officer corps. The defense establishment began to implement a set of reforms designed to improve the professional qualities of the current and future officer corps. (10:10,11,12) The leaders in the PRC began to honor the PLA publicly. In 1983, Teng Hsiao-p'ing, 80, held a parade in honor of the PLA. Although the PLA leadership had been repeatedly purged in power struggles over two decades, evolving PRC leadership wanted to boost the morale of the PLA. Its reputation had been severely damaged in the three week invasion of Vietnam in 1979 so the parade was designed to restore its importance in the PRC. (23:52) Of crucial importance to the development of professionalism within the PLA was the reestablishment and operation of viable professional military education programs.

the training emphasis shifted to combined arms, the disparity in experience levels between the senior and junior officers became more apparent.

The experience level of younger officers within the PLA varied widely from the more senior officers. The younger officers lacked the early experience of the senior officers, gained during the civil war. The younger officers primarily had the experience provided by the Korean War, the border war with India in 1962 and recognized the problems demonstrated by the PLA's military operations inside Vietnam. In November 1982, Keng was replaced as the Defense Minister by Chang Ai-ping, which indicated the PRC's emphasis again on military leadership for the PLA. Chang was a senior military commander, long associated with the PRC's strategic weapons efforts and the development of more modern defense technology.

(20:10) As the PRC became more modern, the PLA officer corps underwent further changes, and modifications were made in China's military strategy.

Within the framework of a more flexible system, the PLA was determined to develop a professional military force. Officers unwilling or unable to adjust to the demands of professional training or education were encouraged to retire. In 1983, the PLA Chief of Staff reported that the average age of its commanders were as follows: corps commanders, 47; division commanders, 45; and regimental commanders, 40-49. The concept of "luring the enemy deep" was displaced



force can best support its future. As the PLA becomes more professional, generation disagreements will disappear. (21:XVII11)

The Professional Military Education programs have contributed greatly to the professionalization of the PLA and will improve as the emphasis toward modernization continues. China is aware of the need to modernize its armed forces and is receptive to assistance from outside sources whenever available. (26:11)

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